The Congregationalist

"His hoary frost, His fleecy snow
Descend and clothe the ground;
The liquid streams forbear to flow,
In icy fetters bound!

— Isaac Watts

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"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

FREE CHURCHES IN AMERICA AND THEIR INFLUENCE

Mrs. Sydney G. Abbot, Westford, Massachusetts

Free Churches in the United States began as separate units so small that the town and Church were one and the same group of people. The Mayflower Compact, the founding document of the Pilgrims, stated, "We . . . solemnly and mutually in ye presence of God, and of one another, covenant and combine ourselves into a civill body politick." There was agreement that they would continue to "enact, constitute, and frame such just and equall laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for ye general good of ye colonie."

The Pilgrims and Puritans established religious colonies. At first, they made no attempt to separate church and state laws. The church principles were basic in the laws which governed the state, and officials of the state were necessarily church members. Voting was restricted to church members. The laws required the support of the minister and attendance at public worship. Every new Church had to be organized with the "approval of the magistrates and elders of the great part of the Churches" in that jurisdiction. It was the state which convened the Synods. Two outstanding Congregationalists, Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams, objected to the Massachusetts laws which gave the state authority over Churches. They withdrew from Massachusetts to found townships in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Thomas Hooker's Part

At the meeting of the General Court of Connecticut in Hartford, 1639, Mr. Hooker preached a sermon in which he said, "The foundation of authority is laid in the free consent of the people: the choice of the public magistrates belongs to the people, by God's own ordinance: they who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates have the right to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place of those who are called." Mr. Hooker's words in behalf of free peoples had a tremendous influence both in the furtherance of free Churches and in the founding of a free nation. The Constitution of Connecticut Colony is said to be "the earliest example of a written constitution, consisting of a government and defining its powers." It gave all worthy citizens the right to vote. In the absence of special laws "the rule of God" was to be followed. The Connecticut Constitution contained principles which were carried over into the Constitution of the United States.

Roger Williams and Rhode Island

The Charter of the Colony of Rhode Island, 1663, contained this statement, "No person within the said colony, at any time thereafter, shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences of opinion in matters of religion, which do not actually disturb the civil peace of said colony; but that all and every person may freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgment and consciences in matters of religious concernments." This statement reflects the Congregational thought expressed in the Savoy Declaration; it points ahead to the securing of religious freedom in the Constitution of the United States; and it suggests the wording of the Kansas City Statement, 1913, which describes Congregational polity.

Gradual Separation

The accomplishment of the separation of church and state was not achieved in all states simultaneously, but gradually, and long after the Constitution of the United States was ratified. The First Amendment secured religious liberty to the people so far as Congress was concerned, but "neither the original Constitution nor any of the early amendments undertook to protect the religious liberties of the people against the action of their respective state governments. Religious affairs were included within the sphere of domestic relations, and were so left to the states to deal with." (*New International Encyclopedia,* Vol. IV, "Civil and Church Law.")

Thus the religious liberty granted by the Constitution of the United States gave the original impetus to state action to secure the separation of church and state. "Separation" here does not mean that the state was disinterested in religion. Civil governments gave assurance that they would not interfere nor exert an influence in religious matters, nor show partiality to one or another religious body, nor use the public funds for the support of one or another religious group or religious project.

Our variety of denominations in the United States today is an outgrowth of religious liberty. We should not be ashamed of the variety of denominations. Religious progress can be made where there is respect for, and recognition of, individual differences and free inquiry. Similarity in goal is not grounds for the belief that all our churches should unite in one national church or in an international church. Each denomination has a different emphasis.

The many denominations make it possible for each person to find the church of his choice; they encourage a variety of approaches to the Christian search and spiritual progress; they offer the continuous unfolding of the understanding of God and His Word; they help to bring to light the evaluation of true and false doctrine; they lessen the chances of developing an elite, ecclesiastical order with authority over an acquiescent membership; they discourage the gradual evolution of those individualists who, rather than struggling under an authoritarian church, would desert the church and resort to a humanitarianism apart from God.

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Free Churches in America and Their Influence

A Brake Against Totalitarianism

There is a strong movement across the country to merge the Protestant denominations gradually to form a United Church of Christ. The exact nature of such a church remains more or less visionary, but it is within the scope of the imagination to see that such a step would be backwards and could hardly escape placing the control in the hands of a few.

A United Church would merely bring up again what has already been decided in Protestantism. Such mergers as that of the present attempt to combine the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church are definitely part of this organized effort to create a Protestant super-church in the United States. As long as free Churches remain, one church is unattainable. Thus, if Congregationalists stand by their principles and remain true to their heritage, insist on their rights, express and practice them, Congregational Churches will act as a brake against this totalitarian goal. Congregationalism will abide as long as individual free members maintain an alert attitude, educating themselves fully on the question of church union.

(This is the last instalment of Mrs. Abbot's manuscript submitted for the Savoy Tercentenary Award.)

NEWS NOTES

Anniversary at Los Angeles, First Church. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the pastorate of Dr. James W. Fifield Jr. at First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, was observed on Sunday, November 15, 1959, at the Pantages Theatre of Hollywood. The heart of the observance was the Commitment Program, at which each member had opportunity to decide what his church meant to him and to declare his commitment to carry out its aims, in terms of time, talent, and money.

Plans at Clear Lake, Iowa. The First Congregational Church of Clear Lake, which was organized on September 25, 1870, has entered upon its ninetieth year with plans for a church building project. The Plans and Construction Committee, Mr. W. R. Wilkins, Chairman, has been obtaining architectural advisory information.

Ordination at Skowhegan. Robert F. Simpson was ordained to the Ministry of the Word at the Federated Church in Skowhegan, Maine, on Sunday evening, October 18, 1959. The sermon was delivered by Rev. Daniel W. Fenner of Framingham, Massachusetts, and the prayer of ordination offered by Dr. Marion J. Bradshaw, Professor Emeritus in Bangor Theological Seminary.

Pastoral Changes. Rev. Robert A. Clark, who has been living in Hadlyme, Connecticut, and supplying Churches in that vicinity, has been called to Beacon Falls, Connecticut. Rev. Robert H. Scanland, Minister of Christian Education at First Church, Los Angeles, has been called as Minister of Church and Parish Activities at Pilgrim Church, Pomona. Mr. Scanland is Chairman of the Commission on Christian Education of the National Association.

A Correction. In the January CONGREGATIONALIST it was erroneously stated that the Congregational Church in Bingham, Maine, had called to its pastorate Rev. Lowell Erickson of the Methodist Church in Strong. The new pastor at Bingham is Rev. Lowell Kjenstad. The Editor extends apologies to Mr. Kjenstad and also to Rev. Lowell L. Erickson of Minneapolis, for this error.

Our Cover Picture. The lake shown in its winter glory is White Lake, in the town of Forestport, New York. The photo was taken by Miss Nettie Bentliff, Woodgate, N. Y.

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

Most early Congregational literature has been long out of print and beyond the purchasing power of interested people. We welcome two facsimile editions about our free church way in its formative period. A sermon collection by John Cotton and a defense of Congregational local autonomy by John Wise are at last available.

John Cotton was one of several brilliant ministers who chose exile rather than submit to the bureaucratic control of the British churches by Archbishop Laud. In New England he won the highest praise as a clergyman at the First Church of Boston and as a dedicated pamphleteer for the Congregational Way. His sermons GOD'S MERCIE MIXED WITH HIS JUSTICE were preached in England and published in 1641. ($6.00)

More important is the defense of Congregationalism in 1717 by the minister at Chebacco Parish in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Here is classic free church polity at its best. While written against Cotton Mather's proposals to give regulatory power to associations, the arguments of John Wise also apply to the present suggested Constitution for the proposed United Church of Christ. Perry Miller of Harvard provides the historical background for the book in a valuable introduction. A VINDICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW ENGLAND CHURCHES ($6.00)

SCHOLAR'S FACSIMILES, 118 N. W. Street, Gainsville, Florida, are to be warmly commended for reprinting these two volumes. We hope they are encouraged to reprint other works, i.e., Thomas Hooker's SURVEY OF THE SUMME OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE (1648) or Richard Mather's CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH COVENANT DISCUSSED (1643). Letters of commendation and support would be in order.

Other Recommended Books

Perry Miller, ORTHODOXY IN MASSACHUSETTS 1630-50, Beacon Press paperback. $1.95

Perry Miller, JONATHAN EDWARDS, Meridian paperback.

Harold J. Ockenga, POWER THROUGH PENTECOST, Eerdmans Publishing Co.

WOMEN'S WORK

Mrs. Robert E. Collins, Grand Rapids, Michigan

HOW WOMEN SERVE THEIR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

We serve God and the mission of our churches when we volunteer our time, talents, and treasure for the benefit of another who is in need of a willing offered hand. Every community needs and appreciates willing hands desirous of serving in a multitude of ways the needs of individuals, families, churches, institutions, community organizations. Survey the needs of your community with a Christian purpose; appraise the interest of your group and then decide whether a group project is indicated or individual service, or perhaps both. Your reward will be most gratifying. Here are suggested ways our women can serve and in many cases are serving:

From California

Mrs. Lois Hall writes from First Congregational Church in Los Angeles, California, "To answer a vital need during World War I, Red Cross groups were started in the First Church of Los Angeles to sew and knit. When that emergency was over, the group took over the 'Production Work' for the Women's Association. First Church of Los Angeles is located in a densely populated district of people over 65 years young. This group answers the need of these people for friendly contacts and a chance to lend a helping hand. Every Tuesday busy hands are at work in the following projects:

1. *Red Cross* — knitting and sewing
2. *Volunteers of America* — sewing dresses, quilts, knitting knee robes
3. *Indian Center of Los Angeles* — layettes, dresses, sweaters
4. *Plaza Center* — A Community Center — sweaters, dolls, dresses
5. *Navy Mothers* — slippers for men in navy hospitals.

Each brings her own sandwich — tea and coffee are obtained at the church at a nominal fee. Fellowship is shared in the work of the church.

Old nylon stockings are collected and sent to Japan where they are unravelled and the nylon thread rewoven into material. This provides a livelihood for many Japanese families. From 10 pounds of discarded stockings, a widow can earn the equivalent of $36.95 from mending, unravelling, sorting, decoloring, dyeing, making flowers and shoulder pads. There are 1695 Japanese working at home, and 426 working in workshops earning an average of from $15 to $42 per month. This service is handled through *Women's Welfare Service of Japan, Doho-Engo-Kai Building, 8, 3-Chome, Haramachi, Shinjukuku, Tokyo, Japan.*

For Senior Citizens

Homes for our senior citizens always have needs that no one in the Home seems to have time to provide. Some need letters written, or read to them. Some need small services provided or errands run; others are delighted for a friendly chat, a donation of materials for handiwork. An occasional afternoon tea and program or Christmas Party with a remembrance for each, will bring joy to them and a never-to-be-forgotten experience for you.

Local hospitals need bandages folded and wrapped; volunteers to help with the many "extras" the nurses and staff members are called upon to do beyond their call of duty, services handled by hospital guilds in the larger communities.

Your own Church provides many opportunities for service projects. There is little that women have not undertaken, from raising money for furnishings; housecleaning; painting; refinishing pews and woodwork; upholstering. Altar flowers and appointments require loving dedicated hands; caring for choir vestments and manning the kitchen take many hours of loving service. Helping your pastor with the many tasks of office work and pastoral calling; providing transportation when needed; mailing a newsletter to shut-ins, college students, service personnel, and out-of-town members; these are other suggested ways of serving your Church.

Working with Social Agencies, needy families can be given a boost over a hurdle by supplying milk, needed clothing, medicine, and at the same time given encouragement and faith in their fellowmen. Rummage sales and second best sales provide a needed service to the community and at the same time, provide a source of income to the group. Many families are clothed entirely by shopping at these sales; but their self-respect is maintained, they are not accepting charity.

From Illinois

A community project at Paris, Illinois, grew from an interest in learning about peoples from foreign lands. In cooperation with the University of Chicago, foreign students were invited for Thanksgiving dinner in the homes of residents of the community. While the hosts learned much about the country and customs of their guests, the guests learned in a tangible way to appreciate American home life, to understand the origin of our national holiday, and to appreciate our heritage of freedom. Similar projects are undertaken by individual churches, and in cooperation with local Y.W.C.A.'s when foreign students at nearby colleges are entertained for week-ends or vacation times by host groups, giving opportunities to visit local industry, attend churches of other faiths, and share experiences.

Helping Where Help Is Needed

Orphanages and Juvenile Homes, wherever they are, always need hands that will mend and sew on buttons, someone who will give a party each month for those who have observed birthdays, someone to arrange for an educational "tour," provide materials and help with

hand crafts. The Business and Professional Women's Club of Los Angeles "adopted for a night" a group of young boys from an orphanage in the city, bringing them to the church for dinner and a party. Wisely, they remembered to let the boys participate in the evening's entertainment. Another group in California adopted an orphanage fifty miles away as a service project. In the Spring when planting and thinning were needed, they loaded their families in their cars. Armed with picnic lunches, surplus growth from their own gardens, and the tools to work with, they made a caravan trip to the orphanage, husbands and children too benefitting by the experiment in "helping."

Helping with a recreation program for our young people is a definite need in every community, whether the program be that of your Church, your neighborhood, or your community. Planned competitive sports, parties, projects, instruction in hobbies and trades — all require adult supervision and adult planning, and financing too, and the influence of our Churches is most needed.

What are you doing to minister to your Church and your community? Remember, the Lord is depending on us to carry on the work He started in Galilee.

FAMILIAR TO CONGREGATIONALISTS?

Rev. C. Shannon Morgan, Pittsfield, New Hampshire

In the brochure published by the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches entitled "What Does The Proposed Constitution Say?" it is stated about Associations and Conferences: "The functions of the Associations and Conferences and their relationship with other bodies, as described in the By-Laws, paragraphs 42-69, are familiar to Congregational Christians and consistent with their general practices."

But is it true that all these By-Laws (42-69) are consistent with the general practices of Congregational Christian Churches? For example, By-Laws 50, 51, 54-56 provide the skeletal framework for judicatories or church courts which are unknown among Congregationalists. These By-Laws read as follows:

50 An association receives and acts upon matters of business referred to it by its conference, the General Synod, and other bodies.

51 An association has the right and privilege *to petition and overture* its conference or the General Synod.

54 A conference receives and acts upon matters of business, requests, counsel and *overtures from congregations or local churches,* associations and other bodies.

55 A conference considers *all references* from the General Synod.

56 A conference has the right to *petition and overture* the General Synod.

What Does This Mean?

The use of the words "reference," "petition" and "overture" is to be explained by quoting from the Constitution and By-Laws of the Evangelical and Reformed Church:

Const. Art. II (Government of the Synod) par. 29: "It shall have jurisdiction over its ministers and congregations. It *may petition* and *bring overtures* to the General Synod, the General Council, or the Officers of the Church."

By-Law 123: "The Synod shall have original jurisdiction in relation to ministers and candidates for the ministry; and the spiritual council in all other cases; but the higher judicatories may institute proceedings in cases in which the lower have been directed so to do and have refused or neglected to obey."

By-Law 138: "All proceedings of the consistory or church council, the spiritual council, and the Synod may be taken to a superior judicatory by *reference, complaint,* or *appeal.*"

By-Law 139: "A *reference* is a submission of a pending matter by a lower to the next higher judicatory, and may be made either for advice or for ultimate decision and trial by the superior."

By-Law 147: "An *appeal* is the removal of a judicial case by a written representation from a lower to a higher judicatory, and may be taken by either of the original parties from the judgment of the lower judicatory."

A Clue to the Future

The operation of the E & R system of lower and higher church judicatories gives us the clue to the meaning of the words "reference," "petition" and "overture" in the proposed By-Laws of the United Church. "Petitions and overtures" describe the way matters are handed up for decision or advice from lower to higher tribunals or judicatories (church courts). By "references" matters are handed down from higher to lower courts for action or execution. The conferences and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ will have juridical power. This will open the way for church trials of ministers and other cases, as is well-known in presbyterian denominations. There is enough skeletal framework in these proposed By-Laws to make it possible at a later date to regulate the system by amendment of the By-Laws by the General Synod *without the consent of the churches.* (Proposed Constitution, Par. 91.)

These By-Laws (42-69) are not consistent with the general practices of Congregational Churches and should be rejected by them.

From the Chairman of the Executive Committee

Professor George V. Bohman, Royal Oak, Michigan

If I were to try to epitomize my reactions to the October meeting in Detroit, the fall Executive Committee meeting that followed the broader conversations on Congregationalism and the constitutional question, and three state meetings which I attended in November, I might describe the warmth of fellowship that exists among so many whose spirits have been and are being tried as we try to preserve Congregationalism. But, warm as this fellowship is, and comforting particularly because we add new faces to the groups as well as our acquaintances with the familiar ones, I detect another quality, far more significant.

Dr. Bohman

To the early Congregationalists, the ancient injunction "No aid save reason," represented the essential integrity of our faith. The corollary to independence for the gathered Church and the individual Christian is the duty of intelligent, rational behavior in all matters. This attitude often needs to be maintained in the face of abysmal ignorance of the history of free Churches and in the absence of careful study and analysis of the proposed constitution in the light of historic documents and even legal decisions which relate to Congregationalism.

If this rational quality has ever seemed essential to a satisfactory religion, it ought to be our way of conversation in the present crisis. Conflict of ideas will always be present. Where there is conflict, men will be tempted either to dodge rational analysis or to lose their serenity in the heat of the emotions aroused.

Our duty and great opportunity in the year 1960 may be to clarify the thinking of thousands of Congregationalists on basic issues. We can teach many who know little of the heritage of our Churches, who vaguely seek but cannot yet put into adequate words the concept of freedom in religious life which is inherent in Congregationalism. Many do not know, for example, that this current effort to presbyterianize our Churches, though new to this generation, is but an old and oft-repeated effort when the history of the past three centuries is understood.

Through studies undertaken in connection with the proposed Constitution, we can stimulate more serious talk and thinking about the nature of Congregationalism than there has been for a century. Let each of us do his part to urge and help arrange as much study and as many discussions as we can.

A CONSTITUTION FOR CONGREGATIONALISM?

Dr. Henry David Gray, Hartford, Connecticut

Webster's dictionary tells us that a "constitution" is "an authoritative ordinance, regulation, or enactment; especially . . . one affecting ecclesiastical doctrines or discipline." The proposed Constitution and By-Laws for the proposed "United Church" are what Webster calls "a written document embodying such organic law, and laying down fundamental rules and principles for the conduct of affairs."

The Congregational Christian Churches are a voluntary fellowship "to do and promote the work of these Churches." This voluntary fellowship has never had and does not now have a vertical power structure ruled under "an authoritative ordinance, regulation, or enactment" such as is now proposed.

A *constitutional structure* is founded on a law-book — a constitution; a *fellowship structure* is founded on a love-book — a covenant.

A law-book *grants revocable privileges* to state, county, and local bodies; a love-book is grounded on *inalienable Christian rights and responsibilities.*

An *authoritative regulation* is legally based and legally binding; a fellowship obligation is spiritually based and morally binding.

What These Powers Really Are

The *power to amend* without reference to the Churches or their Associations is *the power to govern* without consulting the Churches or their Associations.

The power to circumscribe the ministry, which is spelled out in forty-one paragraphs of the By-Laws, is *the power to crimp* the leadership of the Churches; it is a denial of the precious direct pastor-Church relationship.

The call to *preserve the historic faith from destructive error* places in an authoritative regulation that which belongs solely to the particular Church; *it is an invitation to heresy hunts.*

The power to elect delegates, taken away from the Churches and their Associations, *is the power to control* all future acts of national councils, mission boards, or other "instrumentalities."

The power to set boundaries for state and county bodies *is the power to gerrymander* these bodies once initial approval is secured.

The power to set the budget for the entire complex of national bodies *is the power to control the benevolences* of the Churches. It is the modern counterpart of "taxation without representation."

The power of five people (the Administrative Committee) under a constitution *is the power to determine the destiny* of everything.

The power to unite at will with any other denomination *is the power of a blank check* signed in advance by our Churches, so far as all future unions are concerned.

The power of a constitution is the power to "define and regulate." A constitutional document does not rightly "describe free and voluntary relationships," and since it can be amended at will it cannot possibly guarantee the continuance of inalienable rights "now or at any future time."

In short, the vertical power structure represented by the proposed overall Constitution and By-Laws is a complete reversal of the belief and practice of our Congregational Christian fellowship.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP

Marilyn Heaney, Secretary

A group of approximately 40 young people from six states met in Royal Oak, Michigan, on December 28, 29 and 30 for meetings of the National Pilgrim Fellowship. Meetings were held at The Congregational Church of Royal Oak and visitors stayed in local homes.

After some suggestions from Dr. John Rose, chairman of the Commission on Missions, and discussion among groups, the meeting officially adopted the Chinese refugee project for our foreign mission project and aid to new churches as our home mission project. This money will go into a general fund to be used as the Commission sees fit. Any youth groups wishing to contribute should send their gifts to the National Pilgrim Fellowship treasurer (see address below), who will send it on to Dr. Rose.

Youth groups having information about their fellowships which they would like to have appear in THE CONGREGATIONALIST should send the material to their area representatives who are listed below. These representatives will choose the best articles and send them to the secretary who will see that they are printed. Pictures may also be included with articles.

Because our former treasurer was unable to fulfill the obligations of the post, Susan Plock of Burlington, Iowa, was elected to take her place.

One of the main jobs of the area representatives is to help their areas organize so that rallies may be held. Doug Plunkett, the president of the Northeast Fellowship, gave a talk telling how his district functioned to aid the representatives in their work. Any Churches desiring help in any phase of their youth group work may contact their area representative who will be glad to help in any way that he can. A letter has been or will be sent to all Churches explaining the work of the National Pilgrim Fellowship and offering the services of the representatives.

Projects for Summer

Bob Bohman, the president, discussed foreign projects. A detailed letter will be sent soon to all Churches explaining the trips in detail. The places considered and the price of each are: Greece — $750, Italy — $650, and the British Isles — $400 by boat and $525 by air. These groups will leave New York on June 27th and arrive back in New York on August 27th, or a week earlier or later than the above dates.

The members attending the meetings hope to have people interested in participating in caravans similar to the one taken by the Northeast group to Los Angeles last summer. The ones planned for this year, however, would be area exchanges. For example, a group from the Rocky Mountains might come to churches in the Great Plains area, with a group from that area visiting the Rocky Mountains. These trips would last approximately three or four weeks, with the groups exchanging ideas and holding model meetings for the Churches they visit.

The group that took part in the Piedmont work camp last summer showed slides of the area and talked about their experiences. They were enthusiastic about the time spent there and agreed it was a worthy project for young people to consider. Further information can be obtained from Dr. John Rose, Chairman of the Commission on Missions.

The delegates recommended to the Commission on Youth that Rev. Harry Clark of Royal Oak be the adult co-ordinator of the Midwest region which includes the Great Lakes and Great Plains regions.

Rev. Paul Pitman, our sponsor, explained that he would take all our recommendations to the Commission on Youth, of which our group is a part, for their meeting in January. There, our ideas would be acted upon. It was decided that the officers of the National Pilgrim Fellowship would meet in Burlington, Iowa, on May 13, 14 and 15 at Mr. Pitman's church.

Much discussion was held on when and where the next general meeting should be held. Because of numerous problems, nothing definite was decided. However, the group will have to meet during the summer as, at the present, it appears that the annual meeting of the National Association will be held in October. This time would make it difficult for school people to attend.

Officers of Pilgrim Fellowship, Mayflower Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Left to right, John Tiffany, Marilyn Heaney, Bill Hardy, Sue Richardson.

Each Church will receive the complete minutes of the meetings which will show how much we accomplished during that time. The hospitality of the Royal Oak people helped make our rally successful.

The officers and their addresses are: President, Robert Bohman, 1014 Edgewood Drive, Royal Oak, Michigan; Vice-president, Bruce Alexander, 31-D Dutch Point, Hartford, Connecticut; Secretary, Marilyn Heaney, 1874 Lake Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan; Treasurer, Susan Plock, 515 South Garfield, Burlington, Iowa; Southwest District, California, Ann Morgan, 1621 Arbor Drive, Glendale, California; Northwest District, Marilyn Heaney, 1874 Lake Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan; Rocky Mountains District, Robert Bohman, 1014 Edgewood Drive, Royal Oak, Michigan; Great Plains District, Jeanne Giles, 1508 W. Summit Street, Marshalltown, Iowa; Great Lakes, Scott Grill, 260 Bel Air Drive, N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan; South District, Bruce Alexander, 31-D Dutch Point, Hartford, Connecticut; Middle Atlantic District, Diane Montgomery, 20 Markwood Road, Forest Hills 75, New York; Northeast District, Linda Clark, 39 Brace Road, Newington 11, Connecticut, Doug Plunkett, 25 Orchard Street, Adams, Massachusetts.

PROTESTANTISM

Rev. Angus MacDonald, Hutchinson, Kansas

Mr. MacDonald

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century was a reaction against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church called itself the door, and the only door, that led into the presence of God: and this door was jealously guarded. It was often only grudgingly and after the payment of prescribed fees that the priests would dispense the free grace of God. The Church, as an institution, stood guard over God's presence and a man, though thirsting for God, could only come to his God by means of the wickets which the Church guarded.

When Luther pinned his theses on the church door at Wittenberg he committed an act which was revolutionary before the law. The church system Luther challenged in this act was a system that could compel obedience of all citizens by virtue of its privileged position before the law of the state. The church was a legal, over-all institution with compulsive power from the laws of the state. Luther began the Reformation with a violent breach with established ecclesiastical and legal power. He claimed that the Word of God could be received by an individual directly and he claimed as ungodly the theory that only the legally established institution of the Church, with compulsive power could mediate the Word of God.

Luther protested against the entire hierarchical and priestly system in the Church that moved always with the compulsive power of the state: he demanded that such an institution be abolished and that another order be founded on the basis of the freedom of all men to be priests unto God.

Luther's Principles

The principles by which Luther received the courage to initiate the Reformation are variously named. Against the authority of the Church as a legal institution he set the authority of the Scriptures. Against the position that salvation could be gained only by obedience to the Church, he set the theory that we are justified by our faith. Against the tyranny of priests and their assumption that they alone could dispense the grace of God, he set the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. All of these doctrines come down to one thing: that the heart of the Reformation is that each man, as a single individual, is to stand alone before God, responsible to God and responsible to man. He might have help from meeting in fellowship with others but the ultimate responsibility is in man as an individual.

Although, then, the Reformation was a legal and sociological revolution it was not, in essence, as much a revolution as it was a renewal of the original gospel. Religion was brought back to itself. There was stripped from it all the legal and secular trappings that stifled man's search for God and the essence of the thing was laid bare: that each man has a sacred soul that may commune directly with God.

The gospel only had one aim, the Reformation fathers believed, that man should find God; that every individual find his living God as a source of strength and joy and peace. Our Reformation fathers believed God spoke to them in the Bible in the same way as He had spoken to the apostles and prophets in earlier days. The yearning they had to come into the presence of God was a principle not only of the Reformation — although it was the basis of the Reformation — but it was the yearning that was at the heart of every true revival of religion. Our Reformation fathers believed that the true Church is held together by the operation of the Holy Spirit — not by law — and that the Church has to be a spiritual communion of brothers and sisters.

The Reformation Incomplete

The Reformed Church Luther began made all its subjects to be under the control of the reigning prince. The Scandinavian churches were under the control of their prince. The Presbyterian Church exercised a control little less powerful than the Pope did formerly. In the times since the Reformation, when new denominations were set up, such as the Methodist and the Congregational, it was as a reaction to the accretions of power that had accumulated in the new church officials.

As democracy has grown through the centuries, the strongly controlled churches (even the Roman Catholic) have grown more permissive. Yet today even many Protestant churches elevate the denomination over the individual. Now that the civil climate is changing and belief in democracy is on the wane, one wonders if the climate in churches will also change and that there will be a return to stricter control. I suspect that there will be and that this is the reason for the proposed merger of our free Churches with Evangelical and Reformed Church.

Officialdom or The Spirit?

The officials of religion saw themselves as the guardians of God's law; Jesus breathed God's law. The religious officials saw God only in their official enactments and prescribed rules; Jesus saw and felt God everywhere. The religious officials possessed thousands of commandments of God and thought that, therefore, they knew Him; Jesus only had two commandments but knew God in His own experience. The religious officials made their religion into a profession and a trade; Jesus proclaimed a God who could live with the people who were noble in their souls.

The tendency of our day, as it has been the tendency of all days, has been to divide people into two classes, the leaders and the led. There will be an aristocracy which will lead the common people because they are inadequate to lead themselves. While there is point to the theory that there will always be an aristocracy of leaders it should be the attempt of all establishments of society, and particularly of the Christian Church, not to level the common man but to call every one of them to be all he can be. We say that the common man is a child of God. We want him to take his sacred individuality and fill it with all of the divine he can. This is what Jesus did. This is what the Reformation set out to do. This is what Congregationalism stands for.

MEETINGS IN MIDWEST

Many Gather at Oak Park

"Why I believe in Congregationalism" was the subject of Dr. Henry David Gray's address in Oak Park, Illinois, on November 16, given to 130 persons from 22 Churches, some as far away as Elgin, Plainfield, Galesburg and Oneida. Fifteen members of the Church at Plainfield made the 65 mile round trip despite the cold weather and the lateness of the return home. Elgin is about the same distance from Oak Park. Those from Galesburg made a round trip of 300 miles.

Jointly sponsored by the Illinois Fellowship of Continuing Congregational Churches and the Congregational Christian Laymen's Group, the morning meeting was held at the Y. M. C. A. and the afternoon and evening meetings at Pilgrim Congregational Church and its Activities Center, facilities of which were very generously made available for this purpose.

Dr. Howell D. Davies of Oak Park 1st Church conducted the afternoon worship service; Donald J. Simpson of Evanston presided at the dinner meeting, and the Planning Committee included Palmer D. Edmunds of LaHogue, John W. Garrett of Glen Ellyn, Rev. Ellsworth D. Lyon of Oneida, Rev. Leonard H. Maunder of Maywood, A. Stuart Oskamp of Glen Ellyn, George W. Putnam of Wilmette, and Ralph D. Spaulding of Oak Park 1st Church.

After an explanation of the basic principles of Congregationalism, Dr. Gray discussed what our witness is and why it is important. Part of the time both afternoon and evening was given to comment on the Constitution proposed for the United Church of Christ and to a question and answer period. All were impressed with the fine spirit of the meeting and the intense interest shown. The wish that "All our members could have heard Dr. Gray" may be partly realized through use of the tape recording of his address which will be made available to groups wishing to hear it.

Following Congregational custom, the meeting was the result of individuals acting on their own initiative rather than as Churches. The meeting was made possible through the courtesy and cooperation of Pilgrim Church in making its facilities available.

(The tape recording of Dr. Gray's address may be obtained by writing to Dr. Howell D. Davies, Room 2308, 100 North LaSalle St., Chicago 2, or Mr. A. Stuart Oskamp, 262 Glenwood Av., Glen Ellyn, Illinois.)

(*Reported by Mr. A. Stuart Oskamp*)

Michigan Meeting Equally Successful

Responding to an invitation sent out by the Michigan Council for the Advancement of Congregationalism, an enthusiastic Reformation Sunday meeting was held at the Congregational Church at St. John's, Michigan, on November 1st. Dr. Clyde Wilcox, pastor, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fowler, registrars of the meeting, welcomed most of the "old standbys" of free Congregationalism in Michigan, and a goodly number of newcomers.

It was a wonderful "class" of like-minded people who studied the analysis of the proposed Constitution and By-Laws for the United Church of Christ, prepared by Dr. John W. Claxton of Lansing. The discussion was led by Dr. Alan Jenkins of Royal Oak, assisted by Professor George V. Bohman, Rev. Malcolm K. Burton, and Dr. John D. Rose. Reports on the Los Angeles and Detroit meetings were given, and the women had a meeting at which plans were made for future months. The analysis by Dr. Claxton will be mimeographed for free distribution to all interested people.

Officers were elected for 1960, Chairman, Rev. F. Willard Kime of Eaton Rapids; Vice Chairmen, J. P. Karr, M. D., of Jackson and Miss Evelyn Bumgarner of Lansing; Secretary, Mrs. Edward T. Ives, Detroit; and Treasurer, Mr. Frederic MacLean, Detroit.

Coffee and doughnuts were served after the meeting and groups clustered for friendly discussion and greetings to new comers. The brochure showing plans for Mayflower Church, Grand Rapids, was circulated and brought great rejoicing among all. Many a delegate thought of the words of the Psalmist, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity", and all departed for home eager to attend another such meeting when it is called.

(*Reported by Miss Evelyn Bumgarner.*)

TOWN AND COUNTRY WORK BEGINS

Rev. Arthur W. Tiffen, Tarentum, Pennsylvania

The Town and Country Department of the National Association was approved at the Los Angeles annual meeting as the result of a recommendation by the seminar on the Town and Country Church; and provisional organization has been effected with Rev. Arthur W. Tiffen of Tarentum, Pennsylvania, as secretary and newsletter editor, and Mr. B. A. Thomas, 7 Skyline Drive, Duquesne, Pennsylvania, as treasurer. These provisional officers will serve until the 1960 annual meeting.

The Department's activities deal with problems peculiar to the small church, both rural and urban. The quarterly mimeographed newsletter, which will probably be published monthly as material and funds become available, is a vehicle through which small churches may contribute and share ideas for mutual benefit, and combat the "lonely" feeling so common in our smaller free churches, subjected as they are to official pressure and propaganda to "go along with the crowd" into the United Church of Christ. An example of such sharing was found in the winter newsletter, as women's groups from four different areas contributed favorite recipes.

Helping Smaller Churches

Other activities will include research into the availability of missionary speakers to visit small churches to inform them as to the most efficient use of a shared benevolence dollar; also the promotion of religious education and youth work resource materials suitable for the program of the smaller church. Another top-priority activity is the recruitment of young ministers willing to serve rural and small-town churches; also training mature men and women to serve as lay preachers.

The Los Angeles enabling action specified that the Department should be financed by the participants themselves, and its budget, like those of the Churches which support it, has been set quite low. Checks for the support of the Department (whatever nominal contribution your Church can give) should be made to the order of the Town and Country Department and sent directly to the treasurer, Mr. B. A. Thomas, 7 Skyline Drive, Duquesne, Pennsylvania.

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

IMMORTALITY, THE GOAL OF LIFE

Rev. Andrew B. Lemke, Allegan, Michigan

Jesus taught that a man can become immortal while still living in the flesh. He does not have to die out of this earthly body and pass into another world more subtle than this one in order to become immortal. The Kingdom of God is within every man. God has breathed His spirit into man. Man is potentially one with God. When a man awakens to this truth he becomes a possessor of immortality. He realizes God while still living in the flesh, and thereby he attains everything. We may say, therefore, that the purpose of life is to realize God while still living in the flesh. How can God be realized in this personal, intimate way?

When we consult with Jesus by means of a careful study of the Scriptures, we learn that yearning is the key that unlocks the door to the Kingdom of God. We must hunger and thirst for righteousness. Just as a man feels that his lungs will burst for need of air if his head remains immersed very long under water, even so must a man cry out for the living presence of God. We need to know how to deepen our yearning that we may be successful in our quest.

When a man dwells on objects he feels an attachment for them, and attachment gives rise to desire. We must learn to control the mind. This is the basic discipline. For we can direct the mind to God, if we can control it, and then we shall feel an attachment for God, and this attachment will lead to an ever deeper yearning for God. But the mind is restless. Like a monkey, it constantly leaps from one perch to another. It is very difficult to control the mind. In order to tame the mind we need the help of God. We have to rely on the power of prayer.

Praying is practicing the presence of God. There is power in God's name. Let a man repeat God's name — repetition, repetition, repetition — let him repeatedly bring the mind back to God until restlessness ceases, and profound stillness ensues. In that stillness the peace of God will abound. Let him sing God's glories until the atmosphere is vibrant with a hallowed presence. Let him keep company with those whose lives are dedicated to the religious life. These disciplines constitute the essence of worship as it is carried on in church on Sunday. In a modified form these disciplines can be practiced on weekdays. By repetition he can establish the habit of remembering God the moment he awakes from sleep each morning, and the last thing at night, and when he breakfasts, dines, and sups, or pauses for the coffee-break. A man can even hold God in remembrance while he performs the duties of the day, for the mind is marvellously capable. Finally, let him occasionally resort to solitude where undisturbed he may study the Scriptures and practice the presence of God.

Jesus taught that He was one with God, and that we, too, can be one with God and one with Christ. To be one with God is to be immortal — God who is without beginning, God who is without end, God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

HOW RIGHT HE WAS!

(In June, 1938, Mr. Roger W. Babson, then Moderator of the General Council, issued a pamphlet entitled "Where Mr. Babson Stands." Certain tendencies toward domination by denominational organizations and officials, which he foresaw then, have come in recent years to even sharper focus. The following extracts from his pamphlet are published with Mr. Babson's permission. — Ed.)

Congregationalism started and grew like the proverbial Topsy, without help of efficiency experts. During these years of growth, however, it had a spiritual enthusiasm which gave it great power for good — both at home and abroad. Individualism was doubtless carried to excess during those early years. Too many societies and other organizations were formed. There was duplicating and overlapping. As a result, "strategy" and "survey" committees have been appointed to coordinate the work of the various boards and commissions.

The tendency of this Unification Plan, however, is not to be content with *coordination.* Its natural climax is *domination* which to me characterizes the "287" difficulty. This already is in evidence in connection with the Home Boards. They, moreover, are reaching out for the Laymen's Work and the Council For Social Action. The American Board has not yet succumbed to this tendency, but its hands are being tied, and, in my judgment, its work is being seriously handicapped.

. . . . . .

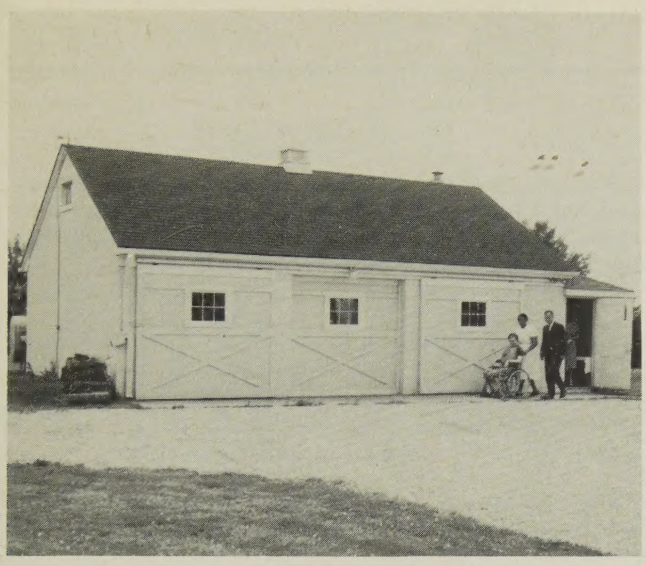
The real difficulty, moreover, lies not with the details, but with the *system* which has grown up and with the *conditions* which have been brought about. Denominational secretaries may not have created this system. Certain ones of them dislike it intensely. Ever since 1913, however, we have been continually making our methods more cumbersome in the name of "efficiency" and by striving to imitate business corporations. Our attempts to put denominational emphasis, rather than personal enthusiasm, behind our church enterprises has led us persistently down the wrong road.

Mechanized or Humanized?

Once the raising of money was perhaps unscientific, but it was very effective. Today our affairs have become an impossible mass of wheels with interlocking committees helplessly trying to function. People were once crying out against there being too many societies; but in trying to get rid of certain societies, we have created seven times seven committees. During this process, the winning of souls to Jesus Christ has been almost forgotten, while a hard-boiled "business" concern is being developed. It is against this "287 System" that I violently and determinedly stand.

I have nothing against any individual at "287"; all those there are honest and faithful people. I believe, however, that the "287" point of view is contrary to the spirit of Congregationalism and is in danger of strangling both our Churches and our missionary societies. You can perhaps mechanize a factory successfully; but you cannot mechanize a church. Congregationalism needs to be *humanized,* not *mechanized.* Efficiency and administrative abilities have their places; but they are not substitutes for enthusiasm, inspiration, and the Holy Spirit.

Faith
Community Church



"Time will distill the worth of your way," said a friend to Rev. William F. Behr, pastor of the gathered group in North Royalton, Ohio, which withdrew from a presbyterially organized denomination and is now worshipping in this garage. The faith of those who made this bold venture and are serving God under these circumstances is a pledge of the worth of their way which will prove itself in years to come.

CULLED COMMENTS

(Most of these "Culled Comments" have been contributed by Mrs. George A. Blake, Charles City, Iowa. Similar brief sayings will be welcomed by the Editor, who will use them as space permits.)

"We may not guess what changes of polity, what new denominational names and customs, or what amalgamation with other bodies of Christian disciples there will be, but we may be sure there will be church life after the faith and order of the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock and Denmark, Iowa, until the end of time."

— "Pilgrims of Iowa," (1911) by
DR. TRUMAN O. DOUGLASS

"America will never be won to Christ by the clergy alone; it will take dedicated laymen."

— BILLY GRAHAM

"It would be just as reasonable to make all American soldiers wear the same sized shoe as to try to impose a national religion on all the people."

— BISHOP GERALD KENNEDY (Methodist), California

"This element of fellowship, arising from a spiritual oneness, and being therefore necessary, has been the chief vehicle on which centralized and false theories of the church have ridden into power."

— DR. A. HASTINGS ROSS, "The Church Kingdom"

"A good Congregationalist is one who reads his Bible like John Robinson, attends church like a Catholic, supports his church like a Mormon, and who adheres to the principles of the Pilgrim Fathers."

— HOWELL D. DAVIES

NEW PAMPHLETS AVAILABLE

Since the publication in the November, 1959, CONGREGATIONALIST, of a list of materials available for studying the question now confronting our Churches, several new pamphlets have been issued. For general consideration of the principle involved, we suggest "The Blind Pursuit of One Idea" by Mrs. Robert K. Richardson of Beloit, Wisconsin. This is a reprint from THE CONGREGATIONALIST of last September. "With One Sound Of The Heart," by Dr. Howard J. Conn, pastor of Plymouth Church, Minneapolis, presents the way in which "a fellowship of loving hearts" can work for the "cooperative approach to our common tasks."

The situation in which ministers will find themselves under the proposed Constitution and By-Laws of the United Church of Christ is dispassionately but clearly set forth in "The Freedom of the Preacher" by Dr. Harry R. Butman of Los Angeles. These may be obtained from the National Association office at 176 West Wisconsin Av., Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin, the Eastern Field Office at 61 East St., Melrose 76, Massachusetts, or from Rev. Walter J. Vernon, 515 North Placentia Ave., Anaheim, Calif.

Two recent pamphlets, "Old Untruths Die Hard" and "The Practical Politics of the United Church," with keen analyses of the proposed Constitution may be obtained from Rev. Malcolm K. Burton, 97 Mary Day, Pontiac, Michigan. A tape recording, "The Material and Ethical Aspects of the Merger," by Dr. Howell D. Davies, may be borrowed from him without cost except postage. He may be addressed at Room 2308, 100 North LaSalle St., Chicago 2, Illinois.

NEW OFFER FOR CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS

In an "Open Letter To All Congregationalists" by Dr. Henry David Gray, Chairman of the Commission on Publications, in the November, 1959, CONGREGATIONALIST, an invitation was given to all who wished to extend the influence of Congregationalism's own publication, to subscribe for 25 or more persons @ $1.00 each. Beginning with February 1, 1960, this offer is made still more liberal. The rate of $1.00 each for *ten or more subscriptions* is effective as of this date.

As stated in Dr. Gray's letter, "THE CONGREGATIONALIST wages no war against the ecumenical movement as a sponsor of spiritual unity and understanding. It defends vigorously the continuation of Congregational polity while rejoicing at every evidence of increasingly harmonious relationships among the followers of Christ. THE CONGREGATIONALIST is pro-congregational."

You are invited to use the coupon on back of this notice to send the names of those to whom you wish the publication sent, together with check to the order of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. You will thereby bring to your friends informative and inspirational articles, data on the ever-changing scene within our fellowship, and news of the many activities of the National Association. Why not help your fellow-Congregationalists to keep informed on the work of the fellowship which stands for freedom under God to serve Christ as He reveals Himself "wherever two or three are gathered together in His name"?

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FRIENDS HONOR DR. DAVIES

The esteem in which Dr. Howell Davies is held in the First Congregational Church of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, where he was pastor from 1912-1925, was well shown in the celebration held for him on December 13. Eighty-five members of that Church who knew him during those years along with many who have come to know him since were present at the new Y.M.C.A. The arrangements were made by Mr. Loring Hammond, who was a boy when Dr. Davies began his pastorate there, and Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., former pastor at Wauwatosa and now Executive Secretary of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

Among the highlights of the celebration was the presentation of a check for $1000.00 to enable Dr. and Mrs. Davies to visit Alaska next summer. This trip will bring opportunity to study the possibilities for a new free Congregational Church in Anchorage as well as to visit the Metlakatla Indian Mission, which receives help from the Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Churches.

The Church at Wauwatosa was Dr. Davies' last pastorate prior to becoming Mid-West Secretary for the Missions Council, a post from which he retired in 1950, shortly before he was called to the Executive Secretaryship of the Committee for Continuation of Congregational Christian Churches of the United States.

Date_____

Editor, THE CONGREGATIONALIST
61 East Street,
Melrose 76, Massachusetts

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IN MEMORIAM

Rev. W. A. Marzolf, former pastor of several Congregational Churches, including Clear Lake, Iowa (1911-1916) died recently in Dorchester, Massachusetts, aged 82.

Rev. George L. Thurlow, 73, who had served several Churches in Maine and Massachusetts, died on December 28, 1959, in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Since retirement he had lived in Duxbury.

Rev. J. Harold Dale, who had the unusual record of serving only one Church during a period of over fifty years died on December 26, aged 83. Dr. Dale was pastor of the First Church in Billerica, Massachusetts, from 1903 until his retirement in 1956, when he was made pastor emeritus. Among Dr. Dale's survivors is his step-daughter, Mrs. Sydney G. Abbot, Co-Chairman of the Massachusetts Continuation Committee.

FROM THE LETTER BOX

EDITOR, *The Congregationalist:*

People in Churches from California to New England have inquired about the relation of Piedmont College to the Christian Higher Education Fund. Their inquiries and confusions are readily understood, for some of the CHEF material includes the name of Piedmont College. This has led Churches and individuals to assume most naturally that Piedmont College would normally be scheduled to receive an allocation from these funds.

The allocation of CHEF money for colleges in the United States, however, when available, will be by the Board of Home Missions. To date and for over seven years, Piedmont College has not received any contributions from the Board of Home Missions which have not been designated specifically by the donor to Piedmont College.

No announcement has been made to my knowledge concerning the specific allocations which will be made to colleges from CHEF. Thus, Churches and individual donors have been asked to designate whatever capital improvement funds they desire to send Piedmont College through CHEF. We have no basis for anticipating anything but designated gifts, even though we keenly need and would be glad to accept capital gifts for our program of Christian Higher Education from anyone who believes in our work.

Sending gifts for our Development Program directly to Piedmont College, Demorest, Georgia or through the Missionary Society, Dr. Howell D. Davies, Treasurer, is the simplest and most direct procedure. Thanks again to all our helpful friends.

JAMES E. WALTER, *President*
Demorest, Georgia